



VETERINARY SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA

Information for Overseas Qualified Veterinarians

April 2025



INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been prepared by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc. for the information and guidance of overseas-trained veterinarians who are residents in Australia and for those interested in migrating to Australia. The AVBC regularly updates the information.

This booklet is intended as a guide only and is not legally binding on any of the bodies listed. The information in this booklet is believed to be accurate at the time of printing; however, requirements may change from time to time.

Australia has a federal system of government and is divided into six independently governed States and two Territories. As in most countries, the practice of a profession in Australia requires evidence of an appropriate level of education and practical experience.

Each State and Territory has separate legislation covering the recognition of veterinary qualifications. It is the law in Australia that if you wish to practise veterinary medicine, you must be registered with the local State or Territory Veterinary Registration Board.

The steps that you will need to take to obtain registration as a Veterinarian in Australia are explained on page 3 in "Entry of Overseas Qualified Veterinarians into the Profession in Australia".

To migrate to Australia under a points-tested skilled migration category, you must nominate an eligible occupation that fits your skills and qualifications, and have your skills and qualifications assessed by the relevant assessing authority.

The AVBC has been approved by the Minister for Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business, in accordance with the Migration Regulations 1994, as the assessing authority for the occupation Veterinarian (ANZSCO Code 234711).

If you wish to apply to migrate to Australia as a Veterinarian under the points-based skilled migration program, you may need to have your skills assessed by the AVBC, prior to submitting your visa application. The AVBC will assess your skills as "suitable" or "not suitable" against the requirements it has established.

If the type of visa you are applying for requires a skills assessment, it must be included with your visa application to the Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs.

Please note that you can only apply for a skills assessment if your primary veterinary qualifications fall into the category of qualifications immediately acceptable to Veterinary Registration Boards and you are already registered with one of the Veterinary Registration Boards in Australia.

Successfully migrating to Australia as a Veterinarian is no guarantee of employment in Australia as Veterinarian. Requirements additional to those for migration may need to be met, and you will need to contact the relevant organisation for advice.

The AVBC can only provide advice on applying for a skills assessment. AVBC does not provide information about how to migrate to Australia. Information is available from the Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs www.homeaffairs.gov.au.

VETERINARY SCIENCE IN AUSTRALIA

Veterinary science is a well established profession in Australia. There are over 14,000 veterinary professionals in Australia. The majority, about 70%, are in private practice, caring for pets, livestock animals, horses, and wildlife and exotic animals. Veterinarians also work in corporate veterinary medicine, including the pharmaceutical industry, and in government agencies working to prevent and control diseases that may affect animals, people, the environment, and food sources. Veterinary professionals also work in the research and higher education sectors and are employed by animal welfare agencies ensuring animal health and welfare nationally and internationally.

There have been recent developments to :

- encourage the establishment of more and bigger private practices in the cities and towns to care for the growing population of companion animals;
- encourage private practitioners to develop livestock and herd health programs in rural areas;
- establish registers of specialists to advise general practitioners, and to stimulate specialisation in many areas of veterinary science;
- improve standards in the fields of veterinary public health and veterinary preventive medicine.

VETERINARY EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

Currently there are seven AVBC accredited veterinary schools in Australia and one in New Zealand. They are at the University of Melbourne (Victoria), University of Queensland (Gatton, Qld), University of Sydney (New South Wales), Charles Sturt University (Wagga Wagga, NSW), Murdoch University (Western Australia), James Cook University (Townsville, Qld), the University of Adelaide (South Australia) and Massey University in New Zealand.

The qualifications awarded by these schools satisfy the formal academic requirements for registration by all of the Australian and New Zealand veterinary registration boards. The contact details of the veterinary schools and registration boards can be found on the AVBC website www.avbc.asn.au.

Current veterinary education in Australia and New Zealand emphasises diverse training so that the profession meets the needs of society. This includes training in sophisticated techniques for diagnosis and treatment of disease, public health and preventive medicine, and animal welfare.

ENTRY OF OVERSEAS QUALIFIED VETERINARIANS INTO THE PROFESSION IN AUSTRALIA

If you are an overseas-trained veterinarian, there are three ways in which you can enter the profession in Australia:

1. by immediate recognition of your overseas veterinary qualifications;
2. by completion of a primary veterinary degree at an Australian or New Zealand veterinary school; or
3. by successfully completing the Australasian Veterinary Examination (AVE).

1. Qualifications immediately recognised for the purposes of registration in Australia

If your veterinary qualification appears on the list of "AVBC Qualifications Generally Recognised", then you are eligible to apply for registration with an Australian veterinary registration board without further examination. For example, if you have -

- a primary veterinary qualification obtained via an Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) accredited veterinary school;
- a qualification from an American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) accredited veterinary school, plus the NAVLE;
- a qualification from a Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) accredited veterinary school in the UK and South Africa;

OR

- you have membership of the RCVS by passing the RCVS Statutory Membership Examination;
- you have successfully completed the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates® (ECFVG®), plus the NAVLE;
- you have successfully completed the American Association of Veterinary State Boards Assessment Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) plus the NAVLE;
- you have successfully completed the Canadian National Examining Board Certificate of Qualification, plus the NAVLE.

then you are eligible to apply for registration without further examination. For information about registration, you should contact the veterinary registration board in the State or Territory in which you wish to practice.

For the full list of the veterinary science qualifications recognised by AVBC, please see the AVBC website www.avbc.asn.au.

If you wish to apply for a skills assessment from AVBC for migration purposes, you must first be registered with an Australian State or Territory registration board. Detailed information about applying for a skills assessment can be found on the AVBC website.

2. Qualifications not immediately acceptable for registration in Australia

If your qualifications are not acceptable for immediate registration, you can either apply to enrol at an Australian or New Zealand university, where you may be granted credit for your overseas studies, and complete the veterinary science course or you can apply to take the Australasian Veterinary Examination.

3. Australasian Veterinary Examination (AVE)

The AVE has been designed to assess, for registration purposes, the veterinary knowledge and clinical competences of overseas qualified veterinarians whose veterinary qualifications are not immediately acceptable for registration in Australia or New Zealand.

AUSTRALASIAN VETERINARY EXAMINATION (AVE) PROCEDURES

The examination consists of the following components:

- Eligibility Assessment – assessment of qualifications, English language proficiency and associated documents to determine eligibility to undertake the AVE;
- Preliminary (MCQ) Examination – consisting of two papers, in multiple-choice question (MCQ) format; and
- Final (Clinical) Examination

Eligibility Assessment

You can take the AVE only if you have been formally assessed by AVBC as meeting the eligibility criteria to sit the examination. You need to:

- hold a degree or diploma awarded after at least four years of study at a veterinary school which appears on the directory of [AVMA ECFVG®-listed veterinary Colleges of the World](#) OR at a school which was part of a college or university listed in the ["World List of Universities"](#); and
- be registered, licensed, or eligible to be recognised, as a veterinarian of good standing in the country in which you studied your primary veterinary degree or first worked as a veterinarian; and
- hold a current pass in the OET, the IELTS (academic) the TOEFL-iBT® or the PTE Academic to the standard required by AVBC. An exemption may apply if you are a native speaker of English born and educated in the UK, Ireland, Canada, USA, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa.

Applicants assessed as eligible to sit the AVE will be sent an application form for the AVE Preliminary (MCQ) Examination.



English Language Requirement

A comprehensive knowledge of English is essential to the practice of veterinary science in Australia. If your first language is not English, ie you were not born and (primary and secondary-school) educated in one of the AVBC recognised English-speaking countries, you will need to have achieved the required minimum scores in one of the following English language tests:

- a **B pass** or higher, or a score of **350** or higher, in each section of the Occupational English Test (OET) achieved in a single test sitting; or
- a score of at least **band 7** in each section of the **academic** version of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, including IELTS One Skill Retake; or
- a score of at least **24** in Listening, **24** in Reading, **27** in Writing and **23** in Speaking in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL-iBT®) achieved in a single test sitting; or
- a score of at least **65** in each of the four communicative skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) of the PTE Academic achieved in a single test sitting.

The currency of an English language test result, for AVBC purposes, is three years. The test must be re-taken after that time.

Please refer to the AVBC English language skills standard which you will find on the AVBC website.

Information about applying for the **OET**, **IELTS (academic)**, **TOEFL-iBT®** or **PTE Academic** can be obtained from the English language test providers. Their website addresses are listed below.

Occupational English Test (OET)

The OET is administered by Cambridge Boxhill Language Assessment Unit Trust, a venture between Cambridge English (Aus) and Box Hill Institute. The test includes written, listening, reading and speaking sections and is held in Australia and overseas.

For information about the OET, please refer to the OET website at:

www.oet.com

Tel: + 61 3 8658 3963

International English Language Testing System (IELTS) - **academic module**

IELTS provides an assessment of whether candidates are ready to study or train in the medium of English. It is readily available at test centres around the world.

You need to sit the **academic module** of the test (not the general module).

Band scores are recorded on a test report form showing overall ability as well as performance in listening, reading, writing and speaking.

For information about IELTS Academic, please refer to the IELTS website at:

www.ielts.com.au

Test of English as a Foreign Language - internet-Based Test (TOEFL-iBT®)

The TOEFL-iBT® test is administered by the Educational Testing Service (ETS); it is an internet-based test.

The test measures a candidate's ability to use and understand English at the university level. The test measures reading, listening, speaking and writing skills.

For more information about TOEFL-iBT®, please refer to the ETS/TOEFL website at

<https://www.ets.org/toefl>

PTE Academic

The Pearson Test of English Academic (PTE Academic) is a computer-based test which assesses listening, reading, speaking and writing.

For more information about PTE Academic, please refer to the Pearson PTE Academic website www.pearsonpte.com

Other Useful Information

Australian residents can obtain information about English language learning programs in Australia from:

- Centrelink – Services Australia
- Department of Home Affairs
- Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) providers
- Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges
- Migration Resource Centres (MRC)
- IELTS
- OET
- TOEFL-iBT®
- PTE Academic

AVE Preliminary (MCQ) Examination (computer-based delivery)

You must pass the AVE Eligibility Assessment, including the English language requirement, in order to be eligible to sit the Preliminary (MCQ) Examination.

The Preliminary Examination consists of two papers in multiple choice question (MCQ) format. Paper 1 has 80 questions and Paper 2 has 80 questions. The questions are designed to test your general knowledge of veterinary science and clinical judgement.

Further detail can be found in the "Information for AVE Candidates" booklet which is available from the AVBC website www.avbc.asn.au. The booklet also contains sample questions.

AVE FINAL (CLINICAL) EXAMINATION

You must pass the AVE Preliminary (MCQ) Examination in order to be eligible to sit the Final (Clinical) Examination. The Final Examination is held over five days and is conducted in an Australian veterinary school. You will be examined at the same level as recent graduates from an Australian or New Zealand veterinary school.

The format of the examination is described fully in the "Information for AVE Candidates" booklet.

EXAMINATION VENUES AND TIMING

The AVE Preliminary (MCQ) Examination is held once a year, usually in April. It can be sat at a number of venues in Australia and at some overseas venues, including New Zealand.

Application forms for an upcoming sitting of the AVE Preliminary (MCQ) Examination are emailed to eligible candidates when MCQ applications open and a closing date for applications advised.

The AVE Final (Clinical) Examination is held only in Australia, usually in ~June and ~November each year.

If you live overseas you may need to apply for a temporary visa to come to Australia, at your own expense, to take this examination.

Late applications to sit any of the examinations described above will NOT be accepted.

FEES

The current schedule of fees for the AVE Eligibility Assessment and the AVE Preliminary (MCQ) and Final (Clinical) Examinations can be found on the AVBC website.

Each fee allows only one attempt at an examination. Withdrawal from any examination will result in a cancellation fee being charged.

For current fees for the OET, the IELTS academic, the TOEFL-iBT® or the PTE Academic, please contact the relevant English language test provider.

AVE CERTIFICATE

If you successfully complete the AVE you will be issued with a Certificate. This entitles you to apply for registration with any Australian State, Territory or New Zealand Registration Board. The Certificate will be mailed direct to you. You must present the Certificate to the registration board in the State or Territory in which you intend to practise or to the VCNZ if in New Zealand.

Once you are registered in Australia or New Zealand you will have the same rights and responsibilities as all other registered veterinarians in Australia or New Zealand.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications for a Skills Assessment or an Assessment of Eligibility to undertake the AVE, are made via the Application Portal on the AVBC website www.avbc.asn.au/application-portal/.

Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc (AVBC)

Tel: +61 3 9620 7844

General email: admin@avbc.asn.au

AVE Coordinator email: ave@avbc.asn.au

AVE Examinations Officer email: exams@avbc.asn.au

NEW ZEALAND CITIZENS

Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangements (TTMRA)

The Trans-Tasman travel arrangement allows Australian and New Zealand citizens to live and work in each other's country without restrictions.

Under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement, individuals registered or licensed to practice an occupation in New Zealand are entitled, upon application, to practise the equivalent occupation in any Australian State or Territory, and vice versa. For information on applying for registration under the provisions of the TTMRA, you should contact the registration board in the Australian State or Territory in which you intend to practise.

New Zealand citizens who wish to have their skills and qualifications assessed for the purpose of working in Australia should approach the AVBC or the registration boards directly.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) and the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists (ANZCVS) are professional organisations which provide information on a variety of professional matters for veterinarians in Australia.

Membership of the Australian Veterinary Association is voluntary and is open to the majority of veterinarians.

Admission to the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists is also voluntary, but an entrance examination must be passed before admission is granted. Fellowships are also available for the College and are considered an important qualification for any veterinarian who wishes to register as a specialist.

Contact details for these organisations and for the New Zealand Veterinary Association follow.

Australian Veterinary Association Ltd

Tel: +61 1300 137 309
website : www.ava.com.au

Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists (ANZCVS)

Building 3, Garden City Office Park
2404 Logan Road
EIGHT MILE PLAINS QLD 4113
AUSTRALIA

Tel: +61 7 3423 2016
email : admin@anzcvs.org.au
website : www.anzcvs.org.au

New Zealand Veterinary Association

Level 2, 44 Victoria Street
WELLINGTON
NEW ZEALAND 6011

PO Box 11 212
WELLINGTON 6142
NEW ZEALAND

Tel: +64 4 471 0484
email : nzva@vets.org.nz
website : www.nzva.org.nz

AUSTRALASIAN VETERINARY REGISTRATION BOARDS

New South Wales

Veterinary Practitioners Board of New South Wales

Tel: +61 2 8338 1177

website : www.vpb.nsw.gov.au

Victoria

Veterinary Practitioners Registration Board of Victoria

Tel: +61 3 9620 7444

email : communications@vetboard.vic.gov.au

website : www.vetboard.vic.gov.au

Queensland

Veterinary Surgeons Board of Queensland

Tel: +61 7 3087 8777

email : vsbqld@daf.qld.gov.au

website : www.vsb.qld.gov.au

South Australia

Veterinary Surgeons Board of South Australia

Tel: +61 8 8359 3334

website : www.vsb.sa.gov.au

Western Australia

Veterinary Practice Board Western Australia

Tel: +61 8 9317 2353

email : admin@vpbwa.org.au

website : www.vsbwa.org.au

Tasmania

Veterinary Board of Tasmania

Tel: +61 400 848 661

email : registrar@vetboardtas.org.au

website: <https://dpiptwe.tas.gov.au/biosecurity-tasmania/animal-biosecurity/veterinary-board-of-tasmania>

Australian Capital Territory

ACT Veterinary Practitioners Board

Tel: +61 2 6207 0012

email : tccs.vetboard@act.gov.au

website : <https://cityservices.act.gov.au/pets-and-wildlife/veterinary-practitioners-board>

Northern Territory

Veterinary Board of the Northern Territory

Tel: +61 8 8999 2028

email : vetboard@nt.gov.au

website: <https://daf.nt.gov.au/boards-and-committees/vetboardnt>

New Zealand

Veterinary Council of New Zealand

Tel: +64 4 473 9600

email : [vet@vetcouncil.org.nz](mailto:veter@vetcouncil.org.nz)

website : www.vetcouncil.org.nz

ACCREDITED VETERINARY SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALASIAN UNIVERSITIES

Accreditation of veterinary schools is an integral part of quality assurance procedures for veterinary education. In Australia and New Zealand this system is managed by the Veterinary Schools Accreditation Advisory Committee (VSAAC) which reports to the AVBC.

Veterinary degrees which are currently accredited as a result of the VSAAC process in Australia and New Zealand are listed below.

The University of Melbourne (Vic)

Melbourne Veterinary School, Faculty of Science

website : <https://mvs.unimelb.edu.au>

The University of Queensland (Qld)

School of Veterinary Science

website : <https://veterinary-science.uq.edu.au/study>

The University of Sydney (NSW)

School of Veterinary Science

website : www.usyd.edu.au

Murdoch University (WA)

School of Veterinary Medicine

website : www.murdoch.edu.au

Charles Sturt University (NSW)

School of Agricultural, Environmental & Veterinary Sciences

website : www.csu.edu.au

James Cook University (Qld)

School of Veterinary and Animal Science website :

www.jcu.edu.au

The University of Adelaide (SA)

School of Animal and Veterinary Sciences website :

www.adelaide.edu.au

Massey University (NZ)

School of Veterinary Science

website : www.massey.ac.nz



Australasian Veterinary Boards Council Inc.

PO Box 159, Collins Street West,
Melbourne Vic 8007

Tel: +61 3 9620 7844

email: admin@avbc.asn.au

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